



When we used to talk about efficiencies, we referred to those little, cheaply built and cheaply rented, bare-bones apartments that single soldiers and geographical bachelors could rent right outside the main gate of Fort Really Hot. They offered some semblance of civilization: a stove top, a closet, and a commode. They were austere places, but a smart guy with some imagination could get by if he cleverly used his limited space.

Nowadays, efficiencies have come to represent something a little bit different. They still demand that cleverness from the user, but now we are talking about resources when we hear the word. How can you leverage your allocations of whatever you've been given to accomplish the mission, or missions? Not enough people? Look for some efficiencies. Not enough equipment? Look for efficiencies. Not enough fuel or repair parts to support your OPTEMPO? Look for some efficiencies. Not enough training opportunities? Simulate. Then look for efficiencies.

Being the mission-type guys they are, tankers and cavalymen will always say, "We'll do our part." Their units might go without as many chemical lights as last year, or quite as many batteries, or fewer CL III POL package products to try and stretch the unit's money and resources to last the year. More than likely though, they will maintain a readiness level close to where they are supposed to be. Those new found efficiencies will probably get 'em through enough of the exercises they had planned to meet the quarterly, semi-annual, and annual training objectives.

Later, after the exercises and recovery operations are complete, these same guys catch up on their reading and see articles about multi-billion dollar acquisition programs and wonder what is going on (for some enlightenment, read about the machinations surrounding the F/A-18 and whether to upgrade or buy new). They look in their motorpools and sure don't see \$3,800 toilet seats. They might see a stray, solitary bolt, inexplicably shipped via FEDEX or Express Mail in packaging befit-

ting a critical component for the space shuttle, but they don't see a lot more ways to create efficiencies.

That our units are learning conservation is very good, for no one likes to see once-used but now contaminated tubes of grease thrown out, or see scrap metal bins with untagged and perfectly good parts destined for a smelter, rather than the turret. No one likes to see soldiers who are not training. Waste should make every one of us mad.

At some point we will have reached the limit of efficiencies and actually begun cutting into our muscle. I don't pretend to know where that point is, for each unit will be different. I do know that a number of guys feel they have streamlined their operations a lot already. Talk of cutting annual ammo allocations or reducing PLLs and ASLs should always send a shudder through the force. We are all concerned about the erosion of collective skills that can't be captured in simulations. Sure, you can keep the simulation running a little bit longer to give the logisticians — that is, all of us — time to police up the battlefield. But, a simulation just isn't going to replicate the effort needed to simultaneously recover two or three dozen armored vehicles and surge for the increased casualty flow. Doing it for the first time at a Combat Training Center certainly isn't our model now, nor what we want, although it may be the direction forced on us by efficiencies.

There is everything right about operating more efficiently; waste in any form is a bad thing. Soldiers not training is bad; money that is thrown away is bad; ordering repair parts then not using them is unconscionable; POL products used once, then contaminated, impoverish the unit, the Army, and ruin our environment. As budgets continue shrinking, it behooves us all to be creative, and to use our collective imaginations to efficiently operate within increasingly tight resource allocations. But, if you see muscle getting damaged, speak up.

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